

Smokefree Action Coalition Briefing

Protecting children from tobacco marketing



Why we want your support for standard packs in the UK

The Smokefree Action Coalition¹ wants the UK government to commit to standard packaging for all tobacco products to protect children from tobacco marketing.

There is good evidence² published at the time the government consulted on this issue that standard packs:

- are less attractive, particularly to young people;
- make the health warnings stand out more; and
- are less misleading about the harms of smoking than current packs.

Smoking is an addiction of childhood – we need to protect the next generation

- Smokers start as children and continue as addicts: two thirds of smokers start before they are 18 and the vast majority while still teenagers;³
- Every year over 200,000 children in the UK start smoking;⁴
- Two thirds of smokers want to quit and many more regret having started;³ and
- Smoking remains the major cause of premature death and disease killing 100,000 people in the UK each year, more than the next six causes of preventable death put together.⁵

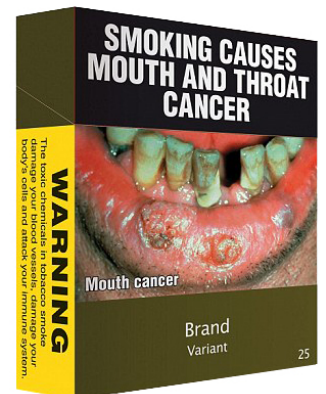
Half of young mothers smoke during pregnancy

- 58% of teenage mothers smoke before or during pregnancy and 36% smoke throughout their pregnancy.⁶
- Maternal smoking causes up to 5,000 miscarriages, 2,200 premature births and 300 perinatal deaths each year.⁷

Australia already has standard packs

Since December 2012 all tobacco packs in Australia have been standardised so that :

- The only branding is the product name in a standard font and colour;
- The pack and contents are a standard shape, size and colour;
- Health warnings on the front and back have been increased in size;
- Tax stamps remain; and
- All packs carry the quitline number and web address.



Australian pack

Email your MP to call for their support for standard packs.

A link to email your MP and a full briefing is available from:

<http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk/plain-packaging.html>

¹ The [Smokefree Action Coalition](http://www.smokefreeaction.org.uk) is an alliance of over 190 health organisations supporting the introduction of standard packs.

² See evidence summarised in the [PHRC report](#) published on the launch of the consultation.

³ Smoking and drinking among adults, 2010. General Lifestyle Survey 2010. ONS, 2012.

⁴ Analysis by Cancer Research UK of data from [Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2011](#)

⁵ Data from national sources from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

⁶ Infant Feeding Survey 2010

⁷ Passive smoking and children. A report by the Tobacco Advisory Group of the Royal College of Physicians. London, RCP, 2010.